



Demon in the Deadlights by Hurlstien

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Summary: Attracting the attention of an evil cosmic entity hadn't been the plan that night. But hunger and obsession lead her down a dark road... with nothing but blinding, orange lights at the end of it. [Bob Gray/It/Pennywise/OC - yeah, you read that right] Rated for gore, language, dark themes and possible mature scenes.

1. Chapter One

I.

It © Stephen King

It: Chapter One and Chapter Two © Andres Muschietti

Demon in the Deadlights © Hurlstien

EDIT: I've merged the two chapters into one as they were both pretty short. And I've combed through and tweaked a couple of things here and there. Just thought I'd let people know so there's no confusion!
[12/10/19]

A/N: so I think I'm in love with Bill Skarsgård...

In other news; this fic is not to be taken seriously. I'm writing this purely for my own amusement and general skill building. But if people enjoy it, then all the better. I thought it would be a fun challenge to see how badly I can pull off a romance with an evil clown alien that eats worlds and kills children. And also because Bill Skarsgård is hot, so... y'know. Guilty as charged.

I've been a fan of IT's story since I was seven when I first watched the film and it scared the crap out of me. I read the book at fifteen and loved it, and now IT has finally been remade, I'm freaking ecstatic! So I'll be incorporating info from all three films and the book, as well as from interviews with Bill Skarsgård and director Andres Muschietti, just to keep things as canon as possible. Personally I feel Pennywise is perfect the way it is without me trying to force any human attributes onto it, such as morals or emotion. So I'll be keeping that to a minimum as much as I can.

This fic will not be a long one, probably around 10-12 chapters.

With that said, enjoy!

WARNING: *This story will include horror, violence and gore, possible sexual scenes and will explore dark themes... Oh! And swearing! Can't forget the swearing!*

you woke me out of my secret grave
you let your pretty world in

CHAPTER ONE

Derry, April 2016.

"*Help.*"

The tiny voice squeaked from between the trees. Its high pitched innocence interrupting the couple's convocation. Chatter that two people having met in a backstreet bar twenty minutes ago might talk about.

"Hey," the man tugged at her arm, "H-Hey, c'mon, its really a kid," he said, dragging her from the bridge and down into the shadows.

Nicole had forgotten his name already and his beer breath was giving her a headache. But with a roll of her eyes, she followed him into the forest. The crunch of undergrowth shivered after them, along with the lazy ripple of the river to their right. A river that led down to the Barrens, an overgrown wilderness of trees clogged with bogs and weeds.

"*Help.*" It squeaked again.

"Hey!" The man- she thought his name was Darren, called as he continued to follow the voice. "Hey, lil'kid? I got some sweets-" he sang and patted his jacket pocket. "Oh... well I- I did anyways."

"You ate them already," Nicole said, squinting into the darkness, "And most of them went on the floor." Caution rose in her gut and she fought to push it back down. She didn't know why any kid would be out here all alone. Not at night.

"*Help.*"

This time, it was followed by a childish giggle and the hairs of Nicole's arms flared to attention. '*Something's not right.*'

Stepping into a narrow clearing, the pair stopped.

"It came from here, didn't it?" Nicole whispered.

"Lil' kid!" Darren called. "Where the Hells'e gone, huh?" He asked as he stumbled then righted himself using Nicole's shoulder.

With a frown she watched him, before rolling her eyes, regret gnawing at her stomach. She turned away and let her gaze flicker through the trees for any sign of movement.

"C'mon kid, jus' come out already- ... Hey, whats...?" Darren's drunken slur faded. His arm rose to point at something ahead of them. "What's a freakin' clown doin' down here, man?"

Nicole sighed and turned back to him. "What?" But following his gaze, she swallowed and felt her heart skip. There, in the line of the trees, stood a clown, pom-poms and all. A bone white face and blood red smile sneered at them under the light of the moon and sent goosebumps erupting up her arms. Her hair prickled on the back of her neck as she noticed his stooped figure and spaced out gaze.

"Aww man, I fuckin' hay-hate clownies," Darren said, hiccuped, then staggered past Nicole. She glanced after him as he went, her frown deepening. "I gotta... Gotta go shake the snay-snakie, boy," he said, before disappearing between the trunks.

Moments passed as the girl and the clown watched each other, neither moving. But a yell and a splash broke the silence coming from the path Darren had stumbled. Nicole blinked and sighed, but otherwise didn't react as her attention remained fixed on the weird-o spacing out in a clown costume.

"Dude, *seriously*?" She spread her hands, green eyes flashing. "I'm sure you're havin' a great time out here, high as shit, but geez, way to kill the mood."

From between the trees, the clown's golden eyes focused on her. A mad glower half covered in shadow. His mouth quivered, an unnatural smile splitting his face. It grew wider and wider, before a low growl rumbled across the space between them. A gloved finger rose from the shadows and shook at her.

"You owe me... a meal."

His voice was rough but childish, like an eight-year-old on forty a day.

Nicole huffed a smile and shook her head as she lit up a smoke. "Look," she took a drag and puffed. "Burger King's still open, but I ain't giving you no mon-"

She froze. A heavy pulse rippled through the air and violent goosebumps erupted across her flesh. Her hair trembled at the horrifying power that throbbed through her bones and her heart thundered against her ribs. The cigarette dropped from her lips as unbridled adrenaline flooded her veins. The clown's smile was gone, replaced with a deep frown, eyes glowing bright pumpkin in the dark.

She couldn't move. She couldn't think. She couldn't even breathe.

A high pitched chuckle pierced the air, before dropping into a guttural growl. The clown's face drooped into an exaggerated snarl, then with a POP he was gone. Like his body had burst out of existence.

Feeling the weight vanish from her chest, Nicole sucked in lungfuls of air. Her knees trembled and she fell to the ground, head spinning. She felt as though she'd just finished a marathon, only there was no runner's high, just a horrid, clenching of nerves. She knew what that pop was, what it meant; it was the sound of air rushing in to fill a vacated space, which meant what she'd seen had been real. All too real.

Dragging a hand through sweat dampened hair, her eyes searched the spot where the clown had stood. Sweat beaded down her face, and when she wiped her lip she found blood smeared across the back of her hand.

"What the fuck was that?" She whispered.

She sat there in the dark, watching, listening, waiting. Only when she was sure the clown was gone, did she move. Pushing herself to a

stand, she sniffed and wiped again at her nose, resigning to the fact that the night was over.

"Guess I'm going hungry, too..."

Montpelier, August 1981.

She hadn't seen the kid. Sat on his little trike in a striped top and red shorts, he was out of her line of sight. But when Nicole kicked the wheel, she heard him cry out and looked down. A chubby boy, no older than six, sat there. And the look on his face as he tried to stop his ice cream from toppling onto the side-walk tickled her and she laughed.

I should stop, this looks bad, she thought, and cleared her throat, the ghost of a smile still on her face as she knelt down. "Hey kid, sorry about that, I didn't see yuh-" She froze, staring into the boys face. "... Archie?"

Satisfied his ice-cream wasn't going anywhere, the boy shook his head at her. "Ben. My names Ben." His voice was quiet as he corrected her and she swallowed.

"Of course, Ben. Sorry," she said. "It's just... you look exactly like my baby brother, Archie."

The summer heat beat down on them as they remained frozen, staring at each other. All around them, people hurried about their business, many making a beeline for the park to relax in shade and enjoy the mini fair that had set up a week ago. No one seemed to notice the boy and the woman and Nicole vaguely wondered where the boy's parents were.

Breaking their staring contest, Ben frowned at her. "Why are you crying?"

"I'm not."

"Yes you are," he said, and careful not to drop his melting treat, he reached out a pudgy hand and wiped a stray tear from her cheek.

Upon contact, a jolt passed between them, like lightening. Nicole sucked in a breath. In her minds eye, an older Ben ran down the hallway of a school, chased by three of his peers. In his fear, the boy slipped and smacked the floor, and they fell upon him, like wolves to a kill, slapping him and laughing.

Oink! Oink!

Whatcha gunna do, piggy? Huh? Whatcha gunna do, y'fat fuck?

They howled with laughter as tears beaded down Ben's round cheeks. Their smacks echoed in her ears as they left fat welts across his skin. Then the memory skipped and they were gone. The face of an older man appeared and sneered down at the boy where he lay, helpless and alone. Lips curling back over yellowed teeth alongside heavy wrinkles and a receding hairline. The school coach.

Look at you. Fuckin' disgusting...

Her stomach burned as she blinked back to the present.

Ben snapped his hand back and stared at her, sensing something was wrong, but unsure what. "You okay, lady?"

She paused. "Yeah... I, uh, just remembered something, is all," she said and watched as he refocused his attention on his ice-cream; a Mr Whippy with strawberry and chocolate sauce, hundreds and thousands and a flake to boot. A smile twitched at her and she pointed to it. "What you got there?"

"Whippy, with all the trimmins," he said, white cream coating his lips.

"You like ice-cream, huh?"

"Uh-huh!" Ben nodded.

She smiled. "Me too."

"My dad used to get it me all the time, but he's with the army now."

Nicole's smile faltered. From his touch of her cheek, she knew the

boys father would die. She felt the anger and sadness that would one day sour him. The frustration and loneliness. She knew the feeling. But he wouldn't know it himself for another three years.

"Ben? Benny?!"

The boy looked over his shoulder at the woman's call and Nicole followed his gaze, guessing the portly woman hurrying over to them to be his mother.

Ben looked back to the creamy snack, then to the woman and back again. "You want some?"

Nicole smiled. "That's okay, you eat it. I gotta go, anyway." She stood and ruffled his hair as he lapped up dribbles of cream before they splattered on his shorts. "Be good, Kid."

Derry, April 2016

'She doesn't know your name, and your heart beats like a subway train.'

The leather of the steering wheel was warm under Nicole's hands as she drummed her fingers on it, the Lorry providing the base as it hummed beneath her. She nodded her head along to the radio as her headlights lit up the sign that read: Derry, 2 miles.

"Almost there," she sighed.

The road rolled under her wheels, lit by her beams and the full moon. Trees lined the tarmac and sped past as she closed in on her final stop for the night. Red lines read 03:04 from the radio, but sleeping had never been her strong suit. The night shift was perfect. Ferrying goods to and from Derry and its surrounding neighbours suited her. No traffic and not a soul in sight to impede her journey. Just her, a radio and the eighteen-wheeler.

'Ooo, don't you wanna break her?'

Nicole batted the wheel in time with the beat, wiggling in her seat and feeling the music throb through her skin.

'Ooo, don't you wanna take her home?'

"Maria! *You gotta see her!*" She bellowed, tossing her head. The wind from the open window billowing her hair about the cabin. "Go insane and out of your m-AAHHHHH!"

She slammed on the brake. Her scream drowning in the screech of wheels. Upon impact the entire vehicle shuddered and rocked, and Nicole bounced around in her seat, the belt stopping her from being thrown around the cabin. The smell of burnt rubber wafted in through the window as she slowed down, let the vehicle roll forwards another meter or so, then stopped. The lorry heaved a sigh of relief. Her grip on the wheel was iron as she looked in the wing mirror to see nothing of the man who had lumbered into the road.

'Latina! Ave Ma-'

She smacked the radio off. Her heart thundered as she unclipped her seatbelt, refusing to address the fact that what she'd hit had looked an awful lot like her late father.

"There's no fucking way," she muttered, throwing open the door and jumping down into the road.

Walking the length of the vehicle, she scanned the tarmac with her phone's torch. Sweeping the beam back and forth, she found nothing. No blood. No body. Only black, smoking tyre tracks. Her frown deepened and standing by the rear of the truck she knelt down, casting light under the trailer. Still nothing.

"Maybe I missed him," she said.

But it felt like I hit a freaking bear or something... not a human.

Annoyance bubbling in her stomach, Nicole marched around to the front of the truck and threw her phones light onto the bonnet. Her heart sank; there was no damage at all... Her pulse picked up, breaths deepening as her brain wracked itself to find a rational explanation. Only then did she realise it was far too quiet. No chirping of crickets. No sighing of the wind. It was as though the very earth was holding its breath.

She turned, eyes searching the gloom for any semblance of life, but she came up empty. Stood in the blinding light of her truck, she was alone on that dark stretch of highway. And though she'd tried her best to ignore it, her nape hairs had been stood stiffly on end ever since she opened the cabin door.

Uneasy frown never leaving her face, Nicole turned back to the truck and climbed in. Switching on the engine she let its steady rumble calm her and sighed, running a palm down her face.

"Hey there, Nicky."

With a sharp breath, her eyes snapped open to see a white, grinning face in the reflection of the windscreen. A hot hand gripped her throat and she froze. Her eyes followed the reflection of the arm as it curled around the seat and into the dark behind her. Claws found her jugular and with every beat seemed to dig deeper. Her lips thinned and jaw set.

"You..." It growled and from the back of the cabin a black mist seeped forth, thickening into a body that materialised before her. "Owe me a meal." The mist evaporated and in its place was a clown, crouching, one huge foot on either side of her thighs. "The last one got a little s-s-soggy." A wet laugh broke from the depths of its throat. Its orange eyes glowed like molten rings and she was mesmerised. It leaned closer to her neck and breathed deep. And when it exhaled its chest emitted a rumbling hum.

Looking into its eyes was like staring into fire. Nicole swallowed and the hand around her throat squeezed tighter while her own hands gripped the sides of the seat. He was huge, easily seven foot, and she could see nothing but him as he bared his teeth, the prominent sharpness of them not lost on her.

"Perhaps... you?" Its grin widened and it paused for a moment... then bit down on the woman's shoulder.

Dagger-like teeth sunk into flesh and blood burst forth, soaking the checked shirt his victim wore. The smell was intoxicating, filling its nose like it was drowning. Such thick and vibrant flavour! It reeled back, ripping meat and breaking bone as it tried to comprehend the

intensity... the complexity... The chunk of flesh almost fell from it's jaws in awe, before it threw it further back into its trembling throat and swallowed. Blood trickled down painted lips, landing on and staining the woman's jeans. It didn't move as it let the juices dance their flavour over it's tongue. One gloved hand rested on it's victim's head while the other gripped her arm, anchoring it to reality as it's eyes swam with ecstasy. A shiver rippled through muscles and it purred.

The woman beneath It was still. Her chest no longer moving and her head pushed awkwardly onto her un-mutilated shoulder by It's hand. From the gaping wound the blood flow slowed, reflecting the nonexistence of a heartbeat. A splintered collar bone poked through flesh, threads of torn shirt caught on its point.

The clown sucked blood from it's lips, before it bent its head to lick at the exposed flesh, hot and wet, finding a tendon and twanging it with the tip of its tongue. A chuckle rippled through It, before it dug its tongue further and deeper through knotted muscle and sinew, almost reaching the chest cavity before withdrawing, rolling its head back and taking the time to ponder on the taste that fascinated it so.

Nothing It had ever eaten had *felt* quite like this.

Blinded with distraction and intrigue, the clown failed to notice the woman's shoulder reforming, silken flesh knitting itself back together.

Nicole's cheek spasmed, a finger followed suit, and her blank eyes sparked back to clarity in the dark. Then, a deep growl rumbled up from the pits of her chest, so loud it filled the cabin, like a wild animal's. Black smoke curled from between her teeth and her eyes, once green, were now red. Hot coals burning in the dark, staring right at It.

The clown froze, it's eyes shimmering with mirth before it snickered. It pointed a quivering finger at her as the broken collar sunk back into place, growing new bone through the freshly woven flesh.

She gave no warning. Her hand grabbed It's silver collar, and with a merry jingle of bells the clown was heaved through the open window.

Nicole threw the truck into first gear and stomped on the gas. The vehicle lurched and pulled away, wheels screeching before finding purchase and picking up speed. Pain burned at her shoulder and through the window she heard the clown's manic cackles. Laughter that shivered through her bones and she switched to second gear, building power and speed.

"NICKY! OH NICKY! YOU ARE PUZZLING! PUZZLING! YES! YES! YES YOU ARE!" It laughed, almost choking in its glee. Then the voice changed into a guttural, monstrous cry: "AND SOOOOO **TASTY!**"

But looking in her wing mirror, Nicole saw nothing of the clown as it's voice faded into the depths of the night.

Derry, May 1989

Maybe it was the sun blinding her or how short he was or the complete obliviousness with which she moved, but the next time she met Ben she very nearly fell over him. A curse and a lazy apology fell from her mouth before realising the kid looked about ready to shit himself.

"It's you!" he said. His round face slackened with awe and he almost dropped the books he held. "From the sewer..."

She frowned at him, cigarette bobbing in her mouth as she spoke. "What?" Of all her long years, she'd never once been in a sewer.

The boy stuttered, blushing, and he shook his head. "No its... It's nothing." He turned away and attempted to shuffle off before she caught his shoulder.

"Ben?" It came out as a whisper before the overwhelming urge to hug him seized her. She could still see her little brother in him. And refraining from scaring the boy with her emotions, she instead took a desperate drag on her cigarette. "Montpelier... back in eighty-one. You remember me?" She sounded amazed. After all, the boy had only been around five or six at the time. And their meeting had lasted all of five minutes. But Ben still smiled and gave a nod.

"Yeah, I remember you."

"I remember you, too - and your ice cream." She couldn't help the grin that fought through.

"***With all the trimmin's.***" They said together and laughed.

"So, what's this about a sewer?" She asked and gestured to a nearby bench. They walked over and sat down, Ben placing the books stuffed under his arm on the hot wood between them. "From what I remember it was a clear day and we were in the street close to the park." She said as her eyes scanned the titles of the tomes: 'Treasure Island', 'Derry, Maine: a History' and 'The World's Tallest Buildings'. All of which had faded pink and orange library stickers on their spines.

"Uh." The boy's face faltered and his round cheeks flushed. "Well its... when I bumped you just now... this might sound crazy, but I've always had this vision in my head of a woman- of you, stood in a sewer, like a cistern. But I could never see her face, because of the lights."

"Lights?" Nicole cocked an eyebrow. "In a sewer?"

"Yeah, there's always been these bright, orange lights coming from behind her so I could never see her face."

"Well if you can't see her face, why do you think it's me?"

"Cause it feels like you." He said, so simply. "Warm and... safe." His cheeks burned brighter. And though he'd never be able to describe or even understand it, the same jolt of *something* that had passed through them the first day they'd ever met as he'd wiped away her tear, had passed through them again just now. And he *knew* it was her. Just *knew*.

Nicole smirked and puffed on her cigarette.

"You must think I'm crazy," Ben said, shaking his head and forcing a smile.

"Oh yeah, you're a regular loon." She said, staring off across the street

and the boy looked dejected. "But I know exactly what you mean."

Ben looked up. "You do?"

She nodded, her eyes losing focus. "I get visions, too," she sighed. The image of a slightly older Ben being bullied in the middle of a school corridor flickered behind her eyes. All alone. Tears streaming down his hot, red face. No one to help. No one to care. Her heart clenched and she sucked on her cigarette. "Listen..." she paused, desperate to help him, to impart some wisdom to this kid that would help. "Just... be who you want to be, yeah?" She fought a cringe at how cliché that came out. Ben looked confused. "And... don't take any shit from people. Promise?"

The boy nodded. "Sure."

Nicole glanced at the cigarette in her hand and gestured with it. "And don't smoke. It's bad for you."

The boy laughed. "Okay."

"Pinky swear?" She offered her other hand, little finger curling out.

Seeing her brows pinched and her eyes hopeful, Ben knew this was some serious shit; no adult had ever pinky sworn with him before. And so he hooked his finger with hers and they shook once. "You're pretty cool for a grown-up," he said and Nicole laughed.

"You know, that's the best compliment I've had all year, kid."

Derry, April 2016

Seeing flashes of memories, past, present or future, was something Nicole had been able to do since the night her brother died. All it took was a light brush of skin on skin and more often than not a vision, sometimes two or three, would appear in her mind. Memories of the person she'd touched.

And so, when the image of a naked girl tied to a bed post, tears streaming down her bruised face entered her thoughts, she sucked in a breath and almost threw her hot chocolate over the counter. Her

jaw clenched. Eyes wide. The man whose hand she'd brushed gave her an odd look before turning to prepare the next drink.

The coffee shop was rammed and she hurried over to the condiments area, taking her time to grab a napkin and two sugars before a lady approached from behind. Exchanging a quick 'sorry' as she stepped out of her way and into a prime position to observe, Nicole took the man in. Caucasian, short black hair, brown eyes. Young. Clean shaven. Tall, around six foot. And even at this distance her unnatural eyesight read the name Aiden from his badge.

Satisfied, she left.

The usual five o'clock traffic rolled by as she walked down the road, hot chocolate burning her hand even through the napkin as she turned on to Jackson street, making her way towards the intersection. Her apartment was halfway down Witcham and a steal at a measly two-hundred bucks a month. The bills didn't add much to her overall outgoings, and she found over the two months since she returned to Derry she was saving a hefty sum of money. But it wasn't the cheap house prices that had lured her back.

Derry was a quiet, unassuming town. Small and pleasant, if a little dull. But beneath it all was a roaring energy. It was like the entire town was on fire, and she had to know why.

Opening the door to her flat, she tossed her keys on the kitchen counter, took a teaspoon from the drawer and entered the living room.

"Alexa, play Talk is Cheap by Chet Faker," she said and flopped onto the couch. The smooth crooning of saxophones soon filled the apartment and she felt her muscles relax. Dumping the two sugars into her drink, she set it on the coffee table and stirred as her eyes caught the front page of the local paper.

MISSING MAN'S BODY FOUND IN BARRENS

Darren Burbridge; the man she'd picked up in a bar three nights ago. His body had washed up downstream after falling in while drunk and drowning. Her brow twitched and she took a sip of the steaming hot

chocolate. It hadn't been her fault he'd died, like she'd intended. And she certainly hadn't expected the reason why to turn up in the back of her truck last night.

Goosebumps erupted down her arms as she recalled the burning orange of the clown's eyes. And even though he'd tried to kill her - well, succeeded - she felt drawn to him, or rather, something about him felt... good, felt... delicious. She scoffed at the thought. But she'd never felt anything like it before in her life, and she'd lived a long one.

You're a mouthful, that amounts for, another week on my own.

Her hand found a pen and began to sketch on the back of a bill envelope. She took another sip of hot chocolate and went over the brow lines again, making them bold and heavy set. She sat back and the clown's eyes gazed back at her, the pupils spaced out further than was considered normal.

She thought back to the night before. Cleaning her blood from the cabin's upholstery had been a bitch, not to mention her shirt was ruined. She may owe him a meal but he owed her more; he *had* taken her shoulder with him after all.

'Wanker.' She thought and sipped again.

She knew he wasn't human. That, she decided, was pretty fucking clear. But it only fuelled her curiosity.

She checked her phone for the time, noting she had another three hours before her shift started. Her job would take her to Bangor tonight, not a particularly long journey, but with the stench of bleach and underlying scent of blood, it could end up being a miserable one with a banging headache at the end of it.

She sighed, looked at the pair of eyes again and whispered: "... What are you?"

Thank you for reading.

This is just a pilot chapter to test the waters.

So please, let me know what you think!

I'm really excited; I've got a storyline planned out for this thing already!

The song Nicole is singing along to in the truck is Maria by Blondie if anyone is interested.

2. Chapter Two

II.

It © Stephen King

It: Chapter One and Chapter Two © Andres Muschietti

Demon in the Deadlights © Hurlstien

WARNING! There is a mature scene at the end of this chapter. If you wish to skip it, please do.

UPDATE! I've changed the '*present-time*' time line from June 2016 to April 2016 as there is more I want to fit in. Hope this doesn't confuse anyone.

UPDATE! I've combed through this since publishing and added/fixed a few bits, nothing important to the plot [25/11/19]

CHAPTER TWO

Canmore, Alberta, May 1993

They all died with that same stupid look on their face. Like they couldn't believe it was happening to them. They, who drank bevies with their chums on a blistering Sunday afternoon, who ignored the wife to play golf, who ran red lights because hey, there was no point stopping now. They who tucked their heads down and strode past the homeless desperate for spare change, they who drove a ford or a chevie and took their kids to football on Saturdays. They who beat their wife after one too many beers and a wrong turn in convocation.

The man's throat pulsed beneath her grasp as she forced him back into the tree. The forest around them was dark and silent save for the choked gasps as Nicole's victim struggled for air. His feet kicked a foot from the ground and he scratched at her wrist and forearm, drawing thick welts and blood streaks. But her grip was iron.

Gazing up at him, he looked like a beached fish; eyes bulging from their sockets, mouth gaping desperately for air that would not make it to his lungs. Nicole breathed in his fear and the stench of piss and

turned her head away with a grimace. She sighed, breath curling before her; it was tainting the fresh mountain air.

Unwilling to be this close to the man's swollen gut and steadily growing wet patch for much longer, she took a deep breath.

Her hand flexed and from beneath her palm a light began to glow. The man's eyes rolled back into his skull and his moans ceased. Faint flashes of lightening rippled through the flesh of Nicole's arm, like lights flickering beneath her skin, travelling up to her chest. She closed her eyes, relishing in the warmth of his soul as it seeped from his skin and into hers.

Within a minute she finished, breathing like she'd been running and let the corpse drop into a crumpled heap. Her eyes were still closed as she savoured the last of the energy throbbing through her skin. She felt full- bloated even, and sleepy. Her chest heaved and she looked down, eyes grazing over the man's throat, swollen and a rich shade of plumb from blood collected just beneath the surface.

A bright beam of light broke her from her stare and she squinted up to find three flash lights wobbling towards her through the shrubbery. She hadn't heard them coming; feeding filled her being until there wasn't much else that could distract her. It was when she was at her most vulnerable.

'Hikers? At this hour?' She scowled and lowered her eyes to avoid the glare.

"You've finally slipped up, Devil."

It was a man's voice, gravelly, middle-aged most likely and a smoker. And now that her senses were coming back to her, she focused and honed in on five breathing patterns, four male, one female. And they had formed a loose circle around her. A growl crept up from the back of her throat and though her night vision was excellent, their beams of light blinded her.

"Who the Hell're you?" She asked.

"You are surrounded by priests of God's Holy Ordinance." It was the

same man who spoke the first time. "And now your killing spree is at an end."

"Fear not, Demon," The woman among them spoke and Nicole glanced after the sound. "Only surrender your soul to the Lord and pray he be merciful in-"

"Shut up," Nicole said, raising a hand to block out the light. She scoffed when she felt them flinch at her movement. "Why so nervous?" From behind her hand she picked out the detail of a wide brimmed, fedora style hat and the shine of round glasses. She took a slow step forward. "It was *you* who sought out *me*, right?"

The cocking of a gun stopped her. She held back a groan and, taking a steadying breath, stepped to the left, towards the sound.

The crack of gunfire echoed through the trees and the bullet sank into her chest, just to the right of her heart. Her body shuddered on impact and she took a step back. Her jaw clenched, but a smirk tugged at the corner of her mouth. She heard the scuffling of nervous feet as four of the priests maintained their distance at her approach. But the fifth one, the one who had fired, kept still.

"Demon. You will burn in Holy fire!" The shooter yelled and unloaded five more rounds, all hitting their mark in her torso. But by the time the last one hit, the very first was being pushed out. She couldn't hide the grimace at the pain, but much like her patience, it quickly slipped away in the face of her fury.

The trigger clicked in the silence, no more bullets to expel, and she stopped before him.

"Done already?"

No one saw her hit him, but the cracking of bone was unmistakable. The man fell to the ground, dead, with a dent in his chest.

"Sheridan! Do it now!"

Nicole heard gunfire again. Only this time, when the bullet hit her neck, it was bigger and burned worse than any pain she'd ever felt. She fell forward, blood filling her throat. It's hot, stickiness spurting

from her lips as she gasped, trying to scream, but instead, drowning. Her body twitched, paralysed with agony, bloodstained face pressed into the soil.

Through her clouding vision she saw boots scuff the ground before her and, as her hearing left her, she caught the cheers of victory. And she wondered faintly if she too, had that same stupid look on her face.

Fuck.

Derry, April 2016

The gym was silent besides Nicole's steady footsteps.

Opening the door to the dance hall, she flicked on the lights and let her eyes scan the room, grazing over the blue gym mats, stacked mini trampolines and dusty gymnastic bars shoved into the corner. As she walked over to the speaker system, the mirror wall to her right reflected her body clad in black leggings and a thin, baggy jumper. She plugged in her iPod and the screen lit up the numbers 23:58 along with the background image of Levi Ackerman. She tapped in her pin and scrolled through the songs. Her nail-bitten thumb stopped on her dance play-list.

Her lungs filled and she wondered closer to the mirror as the music began to fill the room. Insomnia and boredom had driven her out of her apartment on her night off and was the reason she now stood staring at her reflection in a deserted gym. Green eyes stared back from sunken lids rimmed with light purple. Her lips twisted. Not eating for two weeks had taken its toll. And if her reflection wasn't enough to tell her, then the fact she found it more difficult to sleep did.

She hummed along to the music as her eyes caught the silvery white patch peeking out from the neckline of her sweater. She pushed back the material and ran her fingers across the expanse of the scar left behind from the attack two days ago. The flesh was rough to the touch, telling of how deep the bite had been. Given another two days it would be gone and she would have nothing to show for what she

went through. Nothing left behind to prove what happened had been real.

Chet Faker began to croon through the speakers and she stretched her hands above her head. Her body fell into a slow step, her feet knowing where to move, the beat leading her on. It got her blood pumping and her muscles warmed until she felt ready to step it up a notch. The song switched and her movements changed with it, becoming sharper and controlled. But a loud scraping from the corridor outside made her jump and knocked her stride.

She stopped, head spinning to watch the door as she paused the song. The silence settled in. She stayed put for a moment longer, hearing nothing more, then restarted the music. Ten seconds passed before she heard it again. The same loud scrape, like a metal table being dragged along the floor. This time she stopped the music and marched over to the door, throwing it open and sticking her head out. An empty hallway met her and she felt her heartbeat in her throat as she spun and checked the other end of the corridor. Nothing.

"Hello?" She called, and felt silly when there was no reply. The gym was open around the clock, it wouldn't be odd for anyone else to be here, but when she'd signed in, she'd noted the last person left at eleven-twenty.

Unless someone's come in after me, she guessed.

Pursing her lips, she waited for any whisper of sound, before turning back into the hall.

She pressed play again, bumping up the volume and, after a minute or so, felt her body begin to relax as she danced once more. The music thrummed through her skin and made her bones sing as her movements hastened. She kept her eyes closed, finding it easier when she had nothing to look at. And soon enough her mind began to wonder.

Oh, she's sweet but a psycho, a little bit psycho.

Hazy memories of times past flitted through her mind, lazy in their

detail. Then her father's weathered face bubbled to the surface of her mind and out of nowhere anger burned. It's intensity like acrid sand in her mouth, poisonous and rough on her tongue. It shocked her, but her body took it and threw the energy into her movements.

Her father's face melted into a fireplace where her baby brother's silhouette stood against the roaring flames. The fury boiled, her lungs burning from the effort. There was fire in her veins and it needed an out.

She didn't notice her jaw lock, teeth clamped together forcing her nostrils to flare, fighting for air. She couldn't feel the sweat beading over her skin but the scent of smoke clogged her nostrils along with the stench of burnt flesh. Tears streamed from her eyes, dribbling tracks down her flushed face. Her muscles burned, gasping for the oxygen her lungs struggled to serve. And even though the music was blaring through the dance hall, the sound of cracking bones was all she could hear.

She's poison but tasty.

The laughter of a child giggled through her mind beneath the memory of her scream. Archie's face came to her, bright and smiling. Then it paled and the boy's blue eyes flared gold... It was the clown. It's hard stare bored holes into her mind's eye. It's cheeks pinched up into a smile, revealing long buckteeth and bloody lips. The childish giggles soured into deep chested laughter.

Behind her closed eyes, the clown opened its mouth revealing teeth like a shark's. Rows upon rows of them, all pointed toward her.

Something snapped and Nicole felt her body propel backwards. She hit the wall, feeling a rib crack under the force and a yell finally broke her locked jaw. Her body fell limp against the plaster, winded and gasping for air as she shivered from the cold sweat coating her skin. Her eyes opened to find the lights flickering and the room filled with thick black fire smoke. She blinked and the smog was gone, but the lights continued to flicker.

Her wild eyes scanned the room, noting the music had stopped and there was a cracked hole in the mirror opposite.

With a wince her rib snapped back into place and she drew a few quick, deep breaths to ride out the pain. And as the feeling eased she felt her body relax. She held up her quivering hands. '*What the Hell jus...?*'

A child's laughter broke the silence and she looked up to see the reflection of a young boy bouncing about on one of the little trampolines in the corner.

"You did it, Lils! You killed father! You killed father for me!" He giggled.

"Archie," she breathed and snapped her head round to see the boy for herself. But the trampolines were bare. She was alone. The lights stopped their flickering and she was left in the quiet. "It's fucking with me," she growled under her breath, then her voice changed to be deep and terrible, like a demon, as she yelled: "Just what the Hell are you?!" Her question echoed through the hall, but silence met it. "Answer me or piss off!"

She jumped at the sound of the door opening and an old man poked his head into the room. "Sorry to disturb yuh- I'm just the janitor!" He squeaked and her heart sunk. She couldn't think of anything to say before he left muttering one last sorry.

Her entire body ached and the soles of her feet burned. Tremors continued to assault her hands as she pushed herself to a stand and inspected the dent in the wall her back had made. "Shit." She walked over to the mirror next and stared at the hole where it looked as though someone had punched it. There was a single crack running through the wood beneath, telling of the force it had endured. She paused, then reached up and placed the palm of her hand over the damage. It fit perfectly.

She recalled her body had been thrown back. '*That was me?*' She knew she was strong enough to cause such damage, stronger in fact, but she couldn't remember ever doing it.

Pursing her lips, she turned away and picked up her iPod. But when the screen awoke to show her the time her heart skipped. It was 05:05. She'd been dancing all night.

'But I... it can't have been more than twenty minutes!'

"What the fuck," she whispered then jumped as the clown's chuckle echoed through her head before gurgling into silence.

Derry, June 1989

'Another one...'

Nicole stood, squinting in the sunlight at the black and white poster of a young girl. Betty Ripsom had gone missing almost a week ago and she wasn't the first kid to do so; there had been a spate of child disappearances throughout the year and it seemed there were no signs of it stopping. Supposedly, it had all started with the murder of a kid called George Denbrough back in October the year previous. From what Nicole had heard, an elderly neighbour had found Georgie by the storm drain on Witcham street, near the intersection with Jackson, and just five doors down from her apartment. If she looked out of her living room window she could see it. The details of his death were gruesome; his arm had been torn clean off, right at the socket. It was likely he'd died before even hitting the ground.

The cigarette bobbed in her mouth and, hands in pockets, she turned away only to walk headlong into a small speeding human. Looking down, she found Ben gasping for breath and held back a laugh.

"Okay, we really need to stop bumping into each other like this." But her smile dropped and her gaze sharpened when she took in his wild eyes and red face. The boy whirled around to stare back the way he'd come. "What the..." She snapped her head up to scan the street for anyone in pursuit. "The Hells gotten into you?"

Gasping, Ben turned back to her, eyes looking at but not truly seeing her. "It- It's nothing," he said and, head down, moved to march past her.

But her hand reached out to brush his arm and she frowned. "A clown?"

The boy froze.

"You're scared of clowns?" Nicole smiled. "Ah, I don't blame you; I was petrified of them when I was a ki-

"It's not..." Ben's lips moved, but no words came. He scowled, turned back to her. "It was a clown at first, but... but then..." He fought with the words, his face getting redder by the second. "A mummy... it was a mummy. And its balloons blew *into* the wind!" He looked at her and shook his head. "I know that's not possible!"

"There was a mummy there, too?" Nicole took a drag on her cigarette and shook her head. "It's June, not Halloween."

"I think... I think it was the same thing," Ben said, staring at the wall beside them, "Like it... could change shape." And at that moment it was far too quite. Nicole realised for the first time that the street was empty. Deserted, in fact. "The clown... disappeared, and then the mummy it... it almost got me on the bridge."

Nicole observed the boy. His hands were still shaking and a clear sheen of sweat slicked his brow. She knew he was telling the truth, about the clown at least. But even though she didn't know Ben well, she didn't take him for the type to make things up, for any reason. She took her cigarette out of her mouth and flicked the ash.

"This mummy tried to grab you?"

Ben nodded, his face still holding a hint of confused vacancy as he replayed the memory in his head.

Nicole looked back down the street from where the boy had run, seeing no sign of any monster, or clown. "Come on, I'll walk you home."

The two ambled down the side-walk in silence, puzzling over what they'd been told and what they'd seen respectively, and both unable to shake the intense sensation that they were being watched.

Ben led them on, silent as the grave until they reached his home, a beautiful detached suburban house complete with front porch and driveway to the garage.

Nicole stood with him on the front lawn, hands in pockets and

cigarette almost puffed down to the nub. Neither of them said anything for a long moment, before the woman seemed to wake herself from her thoughts and sighed.

"Nice house."

Ben didn't say anything and Nicole looked down at him.

"I believe you, by the way, about everything," she said and Ben glanced up at her, the ghost of a smile flickering across his face. "Stay away from it, if you see it again," she said, thinking of the missing kid poster and the horror of what had happened to George Denbrough. "Don't go near it. Stick with your friends and don't go anywhere alone."

"Yeah," Ben nodded, "Well, thanks for walking me back." And with that he disappeared up the driveway and into the house.

Nicole sighed as she watched him go, making sure he'd shut the door tight before she left. But as she turned, something large and red flew up into her face.

"BAH!" Flinching back, she batted whatever it was away only to find a red balloon swaying in the breeze. She watched, transfixed as it floated off down the street away from her, then gently rose into the sky. She thought of the clown Ben had seen and how his balloons had somehow blown against the wind. Then, with a small shake of her head, she continued on her way.

Derry, April 2016

His face was unknown to her, but gorgeous. Pale skinned and blue eyes so shiny they were like silver dollars.

What are you?

He asked the question even though his lips were pressed to her mouth. She hadn't the want nor control to answer, only indulge as she kissed him back. She ran a hand up to his hair, losing her fingers in the thick, dark strands, while his own hands pushed her down onto a mattress and began gliding their way over her body. One snaked up

to fist in her hair while the other slipped down to cup and squeeze a breast. Her moans spurred him on and she felt his member press against her thigh. He forced a knee between her legs and nestled himself inside them, hips resting on hers, head poised at her entrance.

The hand in her hair gripped suddenly and held her head still as he pulled back, pausing for a moment. His eyes clenched hers and he entered her at a brutal pace.

Moaning in delight, she kept up with him and shivered when she felt his lips at her exposed neck.

His hands found hers and interlaced their fingers, pushing her arms up above her head as his pace slowed, thrusting harder, his grip, stronger.

Her moans grew wild at the sensations and she felt him smile, a deep chuckle vibrating from his chest.

From under her chin his lips parted and teeth scraped at the delicate skin of her jugular, his tongue dragging itself and digging at tender flesh to feel the *beat beat beat* of blood beneath. He paused, almost seeming to decide against something before moving down and finding the junction of her shoulder. His teeth made an appearance again, nipping and nibbling their way across her skin. And when he bit down he drew blood.

Nicole winced, but amidst riding the waves of delight with each thrust, she cared not, as his tongue swooped in and lapped at the puncture, masking the pain with pleasure.

Ah.

Laughter echoed through her clouded mind.

I...

His lips drew back again,

...see...

jaw stretching wide

...you.

to clamp down on a mouthful of muscle, canines piercing skin.

His pace picked up and with each thrust his bite hardened.

He must be close, Nicole thought as she, too, began to ride the cusp of her own orgasm. Three more pumps was all it took for her body to tremble to jelly and her moan of ecstasy filled the air.

But he wasn't done. He continued his furious pumping, blood filling his mouth, his eyes no longer silver-blue but a burning orange.

Only when her pleasure was overridden by the pain, did Nicole feel herself begin to ebb away.

She woke with a start, heart pumping and legs tangled in sweat dampened sheets. Her lungs burned, breathing deep as the sensation of pain still fizzled at her shoulder like hot coals.

Rolling over and switching on her bedside lamp, Nicole grabbed the cigarettes on her night stand, quickly lighting one up and took a desperate drag with her shaking hands. She felt her muscles relax enough to notice the pleasant ache still pulsing down below.

"What a fuck," she sighed, breathing out smoke then laughing.

But her laughter soon stopped when she looked up. In the dresser mirror ahead, her reflection stared back, eyes focused on her shoulder where blood seeped from a bite wound, staining the strap of her cami. Her heart skipped and she drew up a hand to dab at the tender flesh before it knitted itself back together, inspecting the blood on her fingertips to make sure what she was seeing was real. She swallowed and took another drag on her cigarette as her eyes scanned the room. But nothing was out of place. No footprints, no open window. She couldn't even sense anyone...

"So... how the Hell did he bite me?"

First ever melon, wtf?!

Sorry for the late posting; I've just this weekend sold and moved out of my house so I was very busy and stressed.

In fact, 'very busy and stressed' is the perfect tag line for me at the moment.

Hello, this is Hurlstien, she's very busy and stressed.

Enjoys cats and writing.

Dislikes vegetables.

I'm losing my mind.

Hope you enjoyed and thank you for reading!